

**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

**COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting held on  
Friday 16 September 2016**

**Present:**

Dr B Towle (Chair)

Professor P Boyle

Mr G Dixon

Mr M Hindle

Ms R Holland

Mr I Johnson

Mr P Lawson

Dr S Macleod

Mr D Moore

Mr A Morgan

Professor M Peel

Professor E Raven

Dr N Reed

Professor J Schwabe

Dr V Sharma

Ms C Thorogood

**In attendance:** Professor J Coleman, Professor C Marsh and Mr C Brain (for 16/M72); Professor S Dixon (for 16/M76); Mr B Friar and Professor I Gillespie (for 16/M77); Mr M Riddleston, Mr D Hall (Secretary) and Mr N Cox (Assistant Secretary).

**Apologies for absence** were received from Dr D Lockett, Professor P O'Brien and Mr L Trotman.

**UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

16/M66 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr M Hindle declared a personal interest in relation to the business recorded under 16/M77 (reserved minutes).

16/M67 **MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL 2016-2017**

Council received details of its membership for the academic year 2016-2017. Professor John Schwabe, Head of the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, was warmly welcomed to his first meeting as a member of Council elected by Senate.

16/M68 **RESPONSIBILITY OF MEMBERS AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

Council received the following documents concerning the powers of Council, the conduct of Council business and the role of members:

- a. Powers of the Council
  - i. Extract from the Statutes (Section 5)
  - ii. Extract from the Ordinances (Section 9)
- b. Statement of Primary Responsibilities
- c. Standing Orders
- d. Charity commission guidance on acting in a charity's best interests

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With regard to the Standing Orders, Council noted that Section 8 had been updated to clarify the arrangements for the chairing of Council meetings in the absence or non-availability of the Chair of Council - the new CUC *Code of Governance* had recommended that HEIs should be clear on this point in their Standing Orders. Section 11 had also been updated to reflect the reduction in the size of Council from 25 to 21 members – the quorum had been reduced from 9 to 8 members, but still required lay members to be in the majority at all times.

16/M69 **MINUTES**

Council considered the unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2016. **Council approved** them as a correct record.

16/M70 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS – APPOINTMENT OF NEW LAY MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

The Chair reported that at a meeting of the Nominations Committee, held immediately prior to the Council meeting, the Committee had agreed to recommend to Council and to Court that the following be appointed as lay members of Council, replacing Judge A Hampton and Mr P Ash, to commence as soon as possible and until 31 July 2019 initially:

Janet Arthur (appointed to Council by Council itself)  
Mehmooda Duke (appointed to Council by Court)

Council received brief biographical information on the above individuals, **approved** the appointment of Janet Arthur and **endorsed** the proposed appointment of Mehmooda Duke for final approval (by correspondence) of Court.

16/M71 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

The President and Vice-Chancellor drew Council's attention to:

- a. his recent appointment to the Board of Universities UK, at which current discussions were centred on the implications of the outcome of the Brexit referendum, particularly in relation to the free movement of EU workers and students' access to the UK student loan book;
- b. the imminent opening of the new pedestrianised Square opposite the Percy Gee Building, replacing the former central car park, which would achieve an overdue transformation to the look and feel of the central heart of the campus;
- c. the government's recent announcement concerning the creation of new grammar schools, with a demand for universities to open or sponsor schools as part of their efforts to widen participation and justify future tuition fee increases. It was unclear how this would fit with the government's stated intention of using teaching excellence measures to grant university fee increases, or what the 'sponsorship' of a school would consist of in practice;

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- d. that the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership and Leicester City Council had both given very high priority to the proposed National Space Park in funding bids for central government support for the project. The outcome of the LLEP's third 'Growth Deal' bid, which included the Space Park proposals, was expected to be announced in the Autumn Statement, on 23 November 2016.

16/M72 **TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – THE FUTURE OF THE VAUGHAN CENTRE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING**

Council considered a formal recommendation from the University Leadership Team (ULT) that the Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning be disestablished as an academic unit of the University from the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year.

In consideration of this recommendation Council had before it:

- a. the full minute of Council's initial discussion of this matter, at the meeting held on 4 July 2016;
- b. the ULT's detailed case for the disestablishment of the Centre, plus seven appendices comprised of:
  - i: the business case provided to unions and VCLL staff in June 2016
  - ii: the counter-proposal submitted by some VCLL staff in July 2016
  - iii: the revised transitional resource plan
  - iv: external representations to the University during summer 2016
  - v: a resolution from Leicester City Council opposing the disestablishment
  - vi: a statement from VCLL staff
  - vii: a report on a survey of VCLL students conducted by the Students' Union
- c. a petition against the closure from the *Save the Vaughan Centre* campaign, submitted through Mr Jonathan Ashworth MP
- d. a letter against the closure from Councillor Sue Waddington, Assistant City Mayor, sent individually to all members of Council.

Exceptionally, and with the prior agreement of the Chair, the following were welcomed to the meeting for the first part of this item and were invited to make brief oral statements to Council and to answer questions as required:

- i. Professor J Coleman, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, presenting the proposals as a member of ULT;
- ii. Professor Clive Marsh, Director of Lifelong Learning and Head of Department at the Vaughan Centre, speaking against the closure and presenting the counter-proposal on behalf of the Centre;
- iii. Mr Chris Brain, Branch Secretary of the University of Leicester branch of UNITE the union (chosen by Professor Marsh to accompany him to the meeting), speaking against the closure and proposing the deferral of a final decision for one year to further explore avoidance of compulsory redundancies.

Council received oral statements from the above attendees, plus a supplementary written statement from Professor Marsh. The attendees then left the meeting and Council commenced its formal deliberations on the recommendation of ULT to disestablish the Vaughan Centre.

Council focussed its deliberations on the strategic context in which the proposals had been developed, and recalled that the University's strategic plan, approved unreservedly by Council in 2015, required the institution to tackle fundamental questions about its future shape, size, focus and resilience. Although the successful delivery of the Plan rested in part on the development of new ideas and initiatives, it had also emphasised that some existing activities might have to stop in order to generate better outcomes, genuine excellence or more effective ways of fulfilling the University's objectives. Many other universities were facing similar challenges, resulting in similarly difficult decisions.

In the above context a review of the Centre's activities in late 2015, and the submission of the counterproposal by some members of staff, included in the papers for Council, had not convinced ULT of any realistic or significant opportunities to refresh its teaching portfolio and student numbers, or to reduce its requirement for ongoing significant subsidy. Fundamentally, judged in the context of the University's other strategic priorities and associated challenges, ULT had concluded that the Centre's specific form of provision was not the most effective or sustainable means of achieving the University's broader objectives for student recruitment and widening participation.

It was on that basis that the University Leadership Team remained convinced of the strong and robust strategic and financial case for its recommendation to disestablish the Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning as an academic department of the University, from the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year. A motion to this effect was proposed and seconded by lay members of Council and Council **voted to approve** the recommendation as proposed by ULT.

In approving the disestablishment of the Vaughan Centre, Council recorded its recognition for the ongoing professionalism and commitment of the Centre's staff, and urged the ULT to press forward with planned discussions with local partners and providers to develop the University's future vision for adult education, lifelong learning and widening participation in Leicester and the region. **Council agreed** that it was unfortunate that this vision had received little publicity in media coverage of the proposal to close the Centre.

#### 16/M73 **DEFERRED BUSINESS**

Due to time constraints Council deferred a planned presentation from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students) on changes in the learning and teaching landscape.

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16/M74 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Council noted** the dates of forthcoming meetings in 2016-17, all to start at 4.00pm:

- Wednesday 16 November 2016
- Wednesday 15 March 2017 (moved from 16 March)
- Monday 15 May 2017
- Wednesday 5 July 2017

CHAIR

Duration of meeting (Unreserved and Reserved Business): Three hours and 45 minutes